

U.S. Senate Committee on Finance

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Contact: Carol Guthrie (Baucus)
Jill Gerber (Grassley)
(202) 224-4515

ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY BILL INTRODUCED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS TODAY

Measure Would Provide Incentives To Help Protect Land, Endangered Species

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Ranking Member Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) today helped introduce the Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2007 (ESRA), which will provide tax incentives to help protect land and boost endangered species populations. The Senators teamed up with Finance Committee members Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) to introduce the ESRA, which provides tax incentives for farmers, ranchers and private landowners who voluntarily agree to put easements on their property or agree to restore, enhance, or manage endangered species habitat on their land.

“I want to do my part to help ensure that our children and our children’s children are able to take advantage of the great outdoors. That’s why I’m behind this legislation to help protect our land and to help endangered species too,” said Baucus. **“By encouraging landowners to enter into these agreements, we can help protect our access to hunting and fishing lands while protecting the land and species that live there at the same time.”**

“I appreciate the support of the groups here today for this important conservation legislation. This bipartisan bill takes a cooperative approach by creating effective incentives to protect endangered species while also safeguarding the rights of landowners,” said Grassley. **“The legislation would provide tax credits, additional deductions and exclusions for private landowners who take steps to help endangered or threatened species. It would also expand the types of qualified cost-sharing payments to included payments under the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. In Iowa, the farm community has long demonstrated its commitment to land stewardship. The provisions in today’s legislation would do a lot of good by expanding opportunities to preserve wildlife habitats and species for future generations.**

The bill will be referred to the Finance Committee for consideration. Provisions in the Endangered Species Recovery Act are as follows:

- Farmers, ranchers and other eligible taxpayers may receive a tax credit if they own habitat or incur costs to recover endangered species
- Farmers, ranchers and other eligible taxpayers may enter into a perpetual conservation easement, a 30 year conservation easement or an agreement for a specific period of time
- Participating taxpayers will develop a management plan with schedule, deadline and monitoring and assistance for participating in the recovery program.

The bill has broad bipartisan support, as well as the support of hunting and fishing groups – such as the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, Environmental Defense, the Defenders of Wildlife, the National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition (NESARC) and the Farm Bureau.

Baucus and Crapo are co-chairmen of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus, which is a group of lawmakers who work to boost access for hunting and fishing across the country.

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